

issues, that need our help, and the government is here to help. Maybe sometimes we do not do everything right, but we are here to help, and I hope that we can fulfill what the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) wrote in here, that our actions are worthy of the aspirations of our children.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's comments, and I think the thing that you said that I really want to stress the most, because we are almost done here, is the fact that this is an optimistic vision, that we are full of hope, and we have a basic vision that says that we will work with the American people as partners to make their lives and our government better.

We are optimistic about what can be done, but we also feel that it can only be done if we change the majority and if the Democrats have the opportunity to implement this partnership with America after November 2.

So I thank both gentlemen.

IRAQ WATCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McCOTTER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue the conversation here and switch gears here just a little bit with the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) and continue the Iraq Watch and talk a little bit about the foreign policy issues that have been facing this Congress and facing the country for a few years now and trying to figure out a way in which we can try to correct this problem that we have gotten ourselves in.

Let me just first say that the whole Congress, Republican and Democrat Parties, Independents, House and Senate, President, we are all very much in support of the troops who are out on the front lines, their families who are making tremendous sacrifices that many of us will never ever know.

I have had the opportunity to be up to Walter Reed and visit some of these injured soldiers, and there is nothing more heartbreaking than to see a 19-, a 20-year-old kid who has lost his or her legs, an arm, and just think about all their hopes and dreams that have, in many ways, been washed away.

So we are taking this opportunity here as Democrats to talk a little bit about how we got into this position, and I want to start on an issue that I feel extremely passionate about.

When this all started after 9/11, the United States of America and an international coalition moved forward in Afghanistan, and we moved forward in Afghanistan because they were housing the Taliban and they were housing or harboring Osama bin Laden, who was the main perpetrator of 9/11 on the United States of America. So many of us are confused, myself included, why we went into Iraq in the first place.

The reason is that we have only so many resources in the United States of America, and we attacked and invaded with an international coalition into Afghanistan. We ousted the Taliban government that was harboring al Qaeda and harboring Osama bin Laden, and we sent Osama running into the Tora Bora region on the Afghan-Pakistan border. We had this international coalition, and we were going into Afghanistan and we were going to rebuild this country, and we were going to make it a thriving democracy. We were going to have a democracy in that region.

There is a great article in the Atlantic magazine this week, for those of you who are at home who want to read it and get the complete analysis and the timeline of how this happened. Then at one point, all of a sudden, all of the generals and all of the military planners in the United States of America began to shift their attention from Afghanistan to Iraq, and they took in troops. We now have 130,000 troops in Iraq. In Afghanistan, we only have 17- or 18,000.

The Special Forces were moved as well, and then even as it states in this article, the satellites that were focused on Afghanistan, that were trying to provide intelligence, were also moved, and they were shifted to Iraq. So how symbolic that we shifted our focus to Iraq and took away from what was going on in Afghanistan.

Slowly but surely, Afghanistan began to unravel. We ended up with a full-blown war in Iraq, and here we are, many, many months away from that, stuck in a quagmire in Iraq that many of us have no idea how we are going to get out of. I am glad to see that Senator KERRY has issued a plan on how we are going to get out of there.

We have to bring in an international coalition. That is the only way to do this. If we do not get troops in and support and money from the international community, the only thing left is to have a draft in the United States of America. If you ask the American people, would you rather have a draft or try to unite the international community, I think most Americans would say let us get the international community united to put troops into Iraq, but this current President cannot do that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT), who has been a real leader on this issue and more articulate than anyone else in this Congress on the problems and challenges in Iraq.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, we do not engage in hyperbole during the Iraq Watch hour, your generous words are a bit overstated, but I want to thank you for claiming the time this evening. I know my colleagues who are regulars on the Iraq Watch are coming. We are assembling.

We want to review again what the current status of events in Iraq and the Middle East are so that we can inform ourselves and hopefully inform our col-

leagues and help educate the American people.

I am sure you are aware that just recently there was what is described as a national intelligence estimate which painted a very bleak picture of the future in Iraq. The national intelligence estimate is a compilation of information drawn from the CIA and other American intelligence agencies. As I indicated, it presents a very, very bleak picture.

It is outlined that there are three different scenarios. The one that is most disturbing is the possibility that Iraq not only will be fractured, but that a full-scale civil war could break out at any time, but I guess, as a Member of Congress, what is more disturbing is that it was just, I think, yesterday when the question was posed to President Bush, what about the national intelligence estimate and the very pessimistic perspective that was presented by our own intelligence agencies, that his response was, well, they are guessing, they are guessing.

That certainly is disturbing to hear our leader, the leader of the free world, make that kind of a statement. I wonder if he reached that conclusion prior to our national tragedy of September 11 when he was presented what is called a Presidential daily briefing on August 6, 2001, that was titled "Bin Laden Determined to Strike in the United States." I wonder if he was guessing at that point in time because he had that information, and now, now we are presented again with a national intelligence estimate that presents a far different scenario than what we hear from the President, from the White House, from the Vice President.

Of course, tomorrow, the interim prime minister will be addressing this House. I think it is important to understand that this was a prime minister that was selected through a nonelective process. I am sure we are going to hear a lot of rhetoric. It will sound good, but it is not the true picture, I would suggest, of what our intelligence agencies tell us is transpiring in Iraq today.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, we had the same situation here when we had the President of Afghanistan here, told us how great everything was going in Afghanistan, how there was not a drug problem in Afghanistan, we were going to have elections, on and on and on.

I would be happy to yield back, but just the American people need to know that this is almost going to be a repeat performance of what we heard a few months ago.

□ 2215

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, Mr. Speaker, the noted conservative columnist, a prominent Republican, William Buckley, recently made the statement that this administration has a dismaying capacity to believe its own PR.

Well, you know, this is not about public relations. This is about war and

peace and the loss of American military lives and untold hundreds of billions of dollars of American taxpayers' money. That is what this is about. To simply say that things are rosy, and they are guessing, I think does a disservice to our intelligence agencies.

Again, to point to the article that was as recent as September 16, it was on the front page of the *New York Times*. It was entitled, "U.S. Intelligence Shows Pessimism on Iraq's Future": "A classified national intelligence estimate prepared for President Bush in late July spells out a dark assessment of prospects for Iraq, government officials said Wednesday. There's a significant amount of pessimism, said one government official who has read the document."

This is just unacceptable, to have the President of the United States say, in response to a question, that they are just guessing. And before we go any further, I think we should indicate that, while we happen to be Democrats, our concern is shared by many prominent Republicans, including men that serve in the United States Congress. So what I have done is I have extracted some quotes from our friends and colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

On September 19, just several days ago, Senator JOHN MCCAIN said this on Fox News, "I'd like to see more of an overall plan articulated by the President." Well, so would the American people.

Senator RICHARD LUGAR, another prominent Republican, chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, less than a week ago, in response to a question about the slow pace of reconstruction in Iraq, had this to say, "Well, this is incompetence in the administration."

"The fact is, a crisp, sharp analysis of our policies is required. We didn't do that in Vietnam, and we saw 11 years of casualties mount to the point where we finally lost. We can't lose this. This is too important. There's no question about that. But to say, 'Well, we just must stay the course, and any of you who are questioning are just hand-wringers', is not very responsible. The fact is, we're in trouble. We're in deep trouble in Iraq." That is CHUCK HAGEL, respected Republican from Nebraska.

CHUCK HAGEL goes on to say, "It's beyond pitiful. It's beyond embarrassing. It is now in the zone of dangerous."

Well, again, I think we have learned that much of what we hear coming from the White House is fodder for a political campaign. But let me suggest that the President should put aside politics, not continue to paint a rosy picture when those who ought to know, know that the reality is totally different. Do not mislead the American people. The American people were misled before. They were misled when it was presented to the American people right on this floor that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

It was the American people who were misled when it was suggested that

there were links between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. That was false, and we know it was false because the independent commission, five Republicans and five Democrats, concluded that it was inaccurate.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I yield to the gentleman from the State of Washington, a regular member and cochair of Iraq Watch.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on what Republican Senator CHUCK HAGEL said, because I think it is accurate. He said, discussing the situation in Iraq, "It is beyond pitiful. It is beyond embarrassing. It is now in the zone of dangerous." And I want to reiterate that that is not just rhetoric; that is reality.

The reason I know it is reality is because we just lost a man from Lynwood, Washington, last week, Corporal Steven Rintamaki, 21 years of age, who will never be coming home, killed in action in Iraq while serving proudly and with distinction in Iraq. Yes, indeed, this is in the zone of dangerous. And this country deserves an administration who will be forthright and truthful and is not looking through this situation with rose-colored glasses.

What CHUCK HAGEL said, that we are now in the zone of dangerous, I think we can say in spades that that is the situation.

I learned something tonight, Mr. Speaker, that is so disturbing I just have to share it. Osama bin Laden, who is still at large somewhere in the world tonight, after the President told us he would get him dead or alive; he is still at large. The al Qaeda network is still functioning and now attacking our troops in Iraq. And we have been very concerned for some time that this administration, in its action in Iraq, has taken its eye off the ball of destroying the al Qaeda network and diverted resources and attention into Iraq, thereby increasing the risk that al Qaeda would remain a threat. And, indeed, Osama bin Laden is alive tonight and is a threat.

I learned something tonight. We knew about the administration moving resources from Afghanistan that could be used in the hunt for Osama bin Laden. The Predator aircraft, the drone that moves around, they moved that to Iraq before we got done looking for Osama bin Laden. We know that the administration has more people checking on people going to Cuba as tourists than they do trying to interdict monies going to al Qaeda. We know about those diversions in this prioritization.

But let me tell you about one I learned about tonight. NBC news today reported that the administration three times had the opportunity to take out terrorist Abu Musab al Zarqawi who, right now, could be associated with some of the beheadings we have seen, actually, his network. Three times the

President quashed efforts to take out Zarqawi before the war in Iraq started because they did not want to diminish or undercut their argument of why they needed to go to Iraq.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman from Massachusetts yield to me on that point?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. STRICKLAND. I just wanted to point out to my friend from Washington, Mr. Speaker, that not only is this gentleman that he is talking about responsible for some of the beheadings, the reports are that he himself, he himself has been the individual that has actually carried out the beheadings of Americans.

Mr. INSLEE. If the gentleman from Massachusetts will continue to yield.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I continue to yield to the gentleman from Washington, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. INSLEE. In June, according to NBC news, in June 2002, the Pentagon drafted plans to attack a camp Zarqawi personally was using with cruise missiles and air strikes. The plan was killed by the White House because they did not want to undercut their argument publicly that we had to go into Iraq.

Again, 4 months later, Zarqawi planned to use ricin, this deadly poison, in terrorist attacks in Europe. The Pentagon drew up a second plan to go after Zarqawi. The White House killed it again because it would interfere with the action, the public message that we had to go to Iraq.

In January 2003, the Pentagon drew up still another attack plan, and for the third time, the White House killed it because "military officials insist their case for attacking Zarqawi's operation was air tight. But the administration feared destroying the terrorist's camp in Iraq could undercut its case for war against Saddam."

If this is true, this is a gross dereliction of duty. We have now seen multiple instances where this administration has moved forces that could have been used to destroy the people that killed almost 3,000 Americans on September 11 and moved them in this effort to go into Iraq under the pretense that there were weapons of mass destruction and under the pretense that al Qaeda was responsible for September 11, both of which have been shown to be false.

This bears scrutiny and investigation, and it demonstrates why we need a new fresh approach in the war against the fundamental nihilists who are still out there planning to attack this Nation.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from Massachusetts will yield once again.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, some may ask, why are these Members of the House of Representatives standing here talking about past history?

Why are they not talking about what is happening today? Well, sadly, we lost three more American soldiers today. Three more today. Every day we are losing American soldiers.

But we are talking about what has happened in the past and the mistakes that were made in the past because the very people who are responsible for that terrible misjudgment or those misjudgments are the very same people who want to remain in power so that they can make decisions for the future. So, in a sense, as we talk about what happened in the past tonight, we are doing it because we are concerned about the future. We are concerned about the same people who made such terrible misjudgments, who misled the American people, want to continue to be in those positions of power.

I would agree with my friend that we have misplaced our priorities. During the Republican convention in New York, the President spoke for 63 minutes during his acceptance speech. And all during that convention there were multiple references to the tragedy of September 11, when so many Americans were killed. But it is almost beyond belief to know that the President talked for 63 minutes, and never once did he mention Osama bin Laden. There are multiple references throughout that week to Saddam Hussein, but not one reference on the part of the President to Osama bin Laden, the man who was responsible, the one who attacked our country, the one who masterminded that terrible day of September 11.

It is as though he has disappeared. We do not hear his name mentioned even by the President. He is the one the President referred to in this very chamber when he said, "He can run, but he cannot hide." The sad truth is, he ran, and he has successfully hidden. And in his hiding, he is planning the next attack upon this country. That is the sad truth.

It is almost as if we have decided that Osama bin Laden is no longer important, this one who was the major person responsible for attacking us. It is almost beyond belief that we could find ourselves in this situation at this point in time after all that has happened. I just think we should remind ourselves that we have not yet apprehended the person who attacked our country.

Sure, we have gone into Iraq. We have spent about \$200 billion. We have seen about 6,000 or 7,000 of our soldiers injured. We have lost well over 1,000 American lives. Yet the man who was responsible for attacking us is a free man tonight, and he continues to be a danger to us.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, when we talk about failure, from the beginning, after our resources were diverted from the military action that was achieved in Afghanistan, the policy that has been promulgated by this administration can only be characterized as a sequence

of failures and, additionally, a refusal to accept responsibility.

□ 2230

It would be so much more credible for the President to stand up and acknowledge the serious consequences that occurred as the direct result of this policy.

I thought it was interesting that the individual that he appointed to conduct the survey in Iraq to determine where at that point in time, because we were told that there were weapons of mass destruction, where they were located, called on the President and that man's name is David Kay, as many of us know, called on the President to come clean with the American people because he was concerned that if we did not do so, if the President did not do so, then the credibility of the United States would be eroded and that when another international crisis erupted and we had to seek out support from other nations, this time we would be looked at as having misled not only the American people but the rest of the world. And that is exactly what has happened.

If anyone has traveled abroad, the antipathy and the hostility that has been expressed about this President and, tragically, about our Nation because of the errors and the lack of willingness to accept responsibility has hurt our national interests and our national security, when his own appointee who was highly regarded and highly respected was the chief weapons of mass destruction inspector appointed by this President said, Mr. President, come clean, tell the American people that we were all wrong. He said that here in this building in a hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. And what does this White House do? They continue to shuffle. They reluctantly say, well, maybe that was a mistake. And then the Vice President continues to suggest that somehow there are links between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden. The only link is that Osama bin Laden despised, despised and hated, Saddam Hussein, whom he considered a corrupter of Islam.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, it is true that in spite of all evidence to the contrary and in spite of the report of the bipartisan 9/11 Commission that the Vice President continues to insist that there was a connection between Iraq, al Qaeda, and the attack upon our country.

It is amazing to me that in spite of all of this evidence that the Vice President would continue to say that. I mean, it is contrary to every expert, every study, the 9/11 Commission. Even the President himself has disassociated himself from that contention. And yet the Vice President continues to make the accusation. Why did the Vice Presi-

dent say something like that that has been so discredited?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, let me suggest this as an answer. Because if one repeats it often enough, a large number of people, unfortunately, will accept it. That is why it is important to have in a leadership role during these very dangerous times an administration that will be forthright, that will be honest, that will admit mistakes, and that will listen to others. That is what is important.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, it takes strength and it takes confidence to be willing to admit a mistake. And, quite frankly, we have not heard the President or the Vice President admit any mistakes, any mistakes. Anytime there is bad news coming out of Iraq, and it is coming out on a daily basis, the word we get from the White House is, we expected that.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, they say that now. But they were not saying that during the course of the major combat phase. They were saying that we were going to be greeted as liberators, that people would be dancing in the streets. That is absolutely false. And yet they insist on maintaining the message. But it is not an honest message.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I yield to the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. INSLEE. It seems to me we are at a Y in the road; and as Yogi Berra said, when you are at a Y in the road, take it. But this administration is refusing to recognize the need for a change in policy in Iraq. Their message to the American people is more of the same. Same old, same old. We are doing just fine. It is hunky-dory in Iraq. So let us keep doing what we have done here for the last year and a half.

I want to suggest there are four things that need a major change in our Iraq policy or we will face certain failure and more deaths, as my constituent did last week.

Four things: number one, we have got to have a meaningful, timely training program to train the Iraqi forces so that they can take responsibility for their own country, which is the only way this is going to be successful. What do we find this administration has done in regard to retraining the Iraqi Army? We are now a year and a half after the invasion of Iraq, a time period where we knew, if somebody was thinking about it, that we were going to have massive retraining needs to train about 250,000 troops. That was going to take some work to do that. One would think people would figure that out. But it is a year and a half after the invasion of Iraq, and this administration still has less than 40 percent of even the people responsible for

training the Iraqis working for us to get this job done. We only have half the capability, according to an article of September 20; 230 of the 600 we knew were going to be necessary are on the job.

This administration has dropped the ball on a fundamental thing that is required for success in Iraq, which is to train their security forces. And why did they do this? I know why they did it. Because they told us we were going to be greeted with open arms, rose petals, and the Iraqi equivalent of champagne. Why would we have to train all these soldiers and police officers? It was going to be a cake walk.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And, Mr. Speaker, we would not have to pay for it.

Mr. INSLEE. And we would not have to pay for it either, Mr. Speaker. So here we are a year and a half after the invasion, this administration still has less than half the infrastructure we need to get this job done. So that is number one that needs a significant change in policy.

Second, we need an administration who will say we have got to have elections sooner rather than later. When we had a brief window where we were not getting bombed and RPG'd for about 3 months early in this campaign, we had a chance for elections. But the President sent Mr. Bremer over there, and he put the kibosh on elections. Sistani wanted elections. They would not allow them. And here we are in this pickle.

And this is why this is important. They are telling us, Mr. Allawi is going to tell us tomorrow, that we are going to have great elections on January 31 in Iraq. That is great except for one problem: there are huge swaths of Iraq today, in late September, that are not under the control of the Iraqi government. Fallujah, Ramadi. We heard about a battle a couple of miles south of Baghdad yesterday. How are they going to have elections to get this job done? They are not prepared to get it done, and the only way we are going to do this is to only have about 50 percent of the country voting.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, does the gentleman know what they call those large swaths of territory?

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would further yield, those large swaths are called no-go zones. And that means that nobody from the Iraqi government or we go to.

What is happening tonight with those no-go zones? The Iraqi insurgents are planning to kill Marines and building up their capability of doing it, and we are not going after them. I am concerned, I am concerned, that one of the reasons we have adopted these no-go zones is because this administration wants no casualties, which none of us want ever, but he particularly may not want them before November 2. We never want casualties ever, but to allow these insurgents to build their forces which they are later going to

throw back in our faces and shoot at our Marines and soldiers is most troublesome.

There is a third thing that needs to change, and I want to note it. We need to get busy allowing the Iraqis to rebuild Iraq. If we listen to what these insurgents are saying, they are angry because they do not have electricity, and they blame us for it. Frankly, I do not think they should be blaming us for it. They should be blaming Saddam Hussein for it. But they do blame us. We need to get a reconstruction program that is working. And the reason it is not working, the reason we have spent less than 10 percent of the money that we voted on a bipartisan basis on a variety of occasions to apply, the reason that money has not been spent, \$18 billion have been appropriated, less than \$2 billion has been spent. Why have they not spent the money? For this reason: this administration has insisted that instead of hiring Iraqis to do the construction and Iraqi businesses and Iraqi employees, they want to hire their pals at Halliburton; and they insisted that American contractors, many of whom happen to be significantly connected to the administration, do this.

And the Iraqis are the ones who are unemployed. Those are the people we should be hiring to get this job done. Every Iraqi that gets a job is one less Iraqi willing to join the insurgency. But, no, this administration wanted to make sure Halliburton got the money.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, on one point, returning soldiers have told me that Halliburton is literally importing Filipinos to do much of the work in Iraq. As the gentleman said, the Iraqi people are unemployed. They have no source of support for themselves and their families. They are just unemployed with no incomes. And yet Halliburton is importing Filipinos and workers from other parts of the world who will provide cheap labor for them while the Iraqis go unemployed. That is just one example of the terrible policy that this administration is following right now.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I yield to the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I believe the reason that Halliburton is doing that is that they do not want to deal with the difficulty of hiring Iraqis. With all due respect, we have to get the Iraqis involved in their own economy, or they are never going to be on board in a new government. And this administration, in their lust, in their lust, to continue their relationship with Halliburton, has squandered this opportunity to get Iraqis involved in their own reconstruction. And it has hurt us big time in the insurgency that is now raging across wide swaths of Iraq.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman means no-go zones.

Mr. INSLEE. No-go zones, Mr. Speaker. And the problem is the no-go zones are not going to be no-go zones permanently. At some point we are going to have to ask American sons and daughters to go into Fallujah, and they are going to be fired at by insurgents. And the problem is those insurgents tonight are building bunkers and recruiting and building taps and they are building car bombs. They think many of them are assembled in Fallujah and driven around the country, and we are not rousting those groups out. And we are going to have to face their guns when they are emboldened and empowered and in a tougher position. That is terrible military doctrine. It is a mistake. And it is going to cost American lives. And I think that it is one of those things that needs change.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, before the gentleman goes to his fourth point, these no-go zones are made up of the largest cities in Iraq. The largest cities in Iraq are no-go zones right now. The gentleman is right. We are not going into those cities now. But the elections are scheduled for the end of January next year. And there is every intention that we are going to go into those cities before the Iraqi elections. If they have the Iraqi elections and much of the country cannot participate, it will be considered an invalid election. People will not be able to accept it. So we know that the intention of this Pentagon, President Bush and Secretary Rumsfeld, is to go into these no-go zones before the end of January.

□ 2245

But they are not doing it now, and I think my friend has indicated why we are not doing it now. We are not doing it now because it is going to be a tough thing to do. We are 41 days in front of our elections, and so basically we are letting these no-go zones fester.

Even members of the Taliban now are moving into some of these no-go zones. So we have the terrorists, the insurgents, building up their networks within these no-go zones, and when we do go in, it is going to be terribly difficult to dislodge them, to overcome them and overtake them. But every day that passes that they have these sanctuaries, basically, they are able to increase their strength, to increase their ability to resist once we do decide to go into these areas.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I think I would suggest this, that what we are seeing in Iraq, because of the incompetence of this White House and this administration, is a burgeoning number of safe havens for terrorism. Yet we hear that there is progress being made on the war on terror. How absolutely false that is.

Again, if I can just take 2 minutes, I do not want to leave the impression that we are speaking here in partisan tone, because so many prominent Republicans, colleagues of ours, share this view. If I may, just indulge me for a moment to read some quotes.

From the former vice chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Doug Bereuter, highly regarded and well-respected. Upon leaving here he sent a letter to his constituents. In it he said, "I have reached the conclusion now that the inadequate intelligence and faulty conclusions have been revealed; that, all things being considered, it was a mistake to launch that military action, especially without a broad and engaged international coalition. Our country's reputation around the world has never been lower and our alliances are weakened. Now we are immersed in a dangerous, costly mess, and there is no easy and quick way to end our responsibilities in Iraq without creating future problems in the region and in general in the Muslim world."

That is somebody who served on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence in this House.

A former advisor to Mr. Bremer, who was personally recruited by Dr. Condoleezza Rice, the National Security Advisor, had this to say about 3 weeks ago. His name is Larry Diamond. "We are significantly worse off strategically than we were before. There are really no good options." Another Republican.

Let me quote William Buckley once more. "If I knew then what I know now about what kind of situation we would be in, I would have opposed the war."

Someone who works in this building on the other side, "Our committee heard blindly optimistic people from the administration prior to the war and people outside the administration, what I call the dancing in the street crowd, that we just simply will be greeted with open arms. The nonsense of all that is apparent."

The lack of planning is apparent. What we had here was a volatile combination of the ideology, the so-called neoconservative influence in this administration, combined with a magnitude of incompetence that if it occurred in the private sector, heads would have rolled, people would have been fired and a new team would come in.

Mr. INSLEE. If the gentleman will yield, you mentioned a pretty explosive word, which is "incompetence." When we have our sons and daughters at risk for their lives, over 1,000 of whom we have lost now, it is a pretty serious charge to suggest that an administration has been incompetent in the prosecution of this mission.

So I just want to quote a Republican Senator in this regard, or two Republican Senators in regards to points two and three that I talked about in saying that we need a major change in American policy in Iraq.

On point two, the issue of rebuilding Iraq, when Senator LUGAR, Republican Senator, was asked—

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCCOTTER). The Chair would remind Members to refrain from improper references to the Senate or its Members.

Mr. INSLEE. Well, Mr. Speaker, let me rephrase. When a prominent Republican individual who served in public office in a post that involves a 6-year term was asked why only \$1 billion of \$18 billion appropriated last year for Iraqi reconstruction, why less than 10 percent of that had actually invested in Iraq, he said, "Well, this is the incompetence of the administration."

"This is the incompetence of the administration." That is what this has been. We need someone competent running the operation in Iraq.

Point three, the point we have been saying, that our military people are going to be endangered as a result of not training people and getting into these no-go zones, another prominent Republican, who once recently ran for President and suffered grievously at the hands of a fellow Republican in South Carolina, said "it was a major error in allowing insurgents to keep control of the City of Fallujah after vowing to oust them."

The same quote: "As Napoleon said, if you say you are going to take Vienna, you will take Vienna," this unnamed prominent Republican person in a 6-year post said.

The fact of the matter is, these are major policy failures of this administration. It is costing us in lives, and we need a change.

Unfortunately, this administration has one prominent rule in Iraq, and an economic policy, for that matter: Do not bother me with the facts. I told you guys it was going to be roses. I told you we were going to be treated as liberators. Despite the fact we have this horrendous problem in Iraq, we are not going to change our policy one wit."

We need a fresh policy in Iraq, and, one way or another, we have got to get it.

Mr. STRICKLAND. If the gentleman will yield, as I am standing here listening to the two of you talk I have a chilling thought, and that thought is this: In spite of all that has gone wrong, even today it seems as if military decisions are being affected by political considerations.

Now, I understand what a serious charge that is, that military decisions would be affected or mandated or influenced by political considerations. But why would we allow these no-go zones in Iraq to remain no-go zones when we know that that cannot continue, that we have got to change that situation before the end of January, if in fact the Iraqi elections take place as planned, and the administration insists that they will take place?

That means that at some period of time between now and the elections in Iraq in January we are going to have to

deal with these no-go zones. And if it is true, and I believe it is, that as each day passes the insurgents who are occupying these areas increase their strength, increase their ability to resist our Armed Forces or the Iraqi forces once they do go into those areas, then it leads me to the only conclusion that I think is rational or logical, and that is that military decisions are being influenced by political considerations, namely the November 2 election in this country, and that is terribly troubling.

I think the American people ought to understand what is going on here, because it involves the well-being of our soldiers, and I think it involves the credibility of our government as we reach out to the world for partners and partnerships.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Reclaiming my time, of course it does. The gentleman talks about our soldiers. I do not think there is any community in this country that expected the need to call upon our National Guard and our Reserves to the extent that they did, particularly when the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Mr. Wolfowitz and Secretary Rumsfeld dismissed General Shinseki, who at that point in time was the head of the United States Army, his estimate that 200,000 to 300,000 troops would be needed. They said that was a wild exaggeration.

Mr. Wolfowitz, that neoconservative who in many ways was the intellectual author of this adventure, dismissed it, because as DICK LUGAR said, we were going to be treated to flowers and the Iraqi equivalent of champagne and dancing in the streets. How long did that last?

But now, but now, oh, no, now we are calling up on a regular basis for deployment after deployment our Reserves, to the point where Lieutenant General James Helmly, who heads the U.S. Army Reserves, said just this past week that the war in Iraq is creating great stress on the Reserves, and he is concerned that they will have a tough time meeting their recruiting goals next year. He also noted that the Reservist jobs in Iraq are just as dangerous as regular troops. There is no more a secure rear area. Our truck drivers and our military police have become frontline troops, again underscoring the incompetence of the planning in terms of the military planning and the reconstruction phase of this inept administration.

Mr. STRICKLAND. If my friend will yield, just one example of the incompetence was the fact that our soldiers were sent into Iraq without body armor. We hear a lot of talk in this Chamber about body armor. We have heard a lot of accusations that somehow a particular person running for President other than the President himself is responsible for voting against body armor. But the fact is that initially, when our troops went into battle, they were sent into battle without body armor. Thousands of them were there without body armor.

I wrote Secretary Rumsfeld about that and asked him to give me a date certain when they all would be well-equipped with this armor, because I had heard from a young soldier, who happened to be a West Point graduate, one of my constituents, he said, "Congressman, my men are wondering why they don't have body armor?"

The fact is that that decision was made to send our troops into battle without body armor, and the war started months before the vote on the \$87 billion that is now being used to accuse others of depriving our troops of this vital equipment. That is just one example. But we also know that they were sent there without armored Humvees and in insufficient numbers. These are examples that I would consider incompetent leadership. Incompetent leadership. It continues to this very day.

Now, the President was asked this past week how he could defend his statements about how well things were going in Iraq in light of the recent report from the intelligence community saying things were not going well.

He answered this way. He said, "Well, they laid out three possibilities: One, things would be lousy; two, things would not be so good; and things would be better."

Well, "things being better" was not one of the possible outcomes, as we heard from the intelligence community. The best that they said we could expect was just more of the same, of what we have right now, and the worst was out-and-out civil war within Iraq. There was no better scenario.

The President seems incapable of just speaking forthrightly and in a candid manner about the real situation to the American people. So we hear this happy talk, and every day, more and more and more of our soldiers are being lost.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I think what we are saying is please, Mr. President, just give it to us straight, okay? Try a little bit of Harry Truman. Lay it out there, the good, the bad and the ugly. The American people can handle it. The American people deserve to know. Unfortunately, this particular White House has an obsession with secrecy.

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We know that. Everybody knows that. But if I can, just for one moment, get back to that \$87 billion that has emerged as an issue in this election. I voted against the \$87 billion. I do not know how either of my colleagues voted; they voted against it. I dare say we voted against it because rather than providing the money to the Iraqi government as a loan, this White House, this President, insisted that we just give it away to the Iraqi government. It was a big give-away. There is no other major donor to the reconstruction effort in Iraq that did not require the monies that are donated or given to be done on a basis of a loan so that their taxpayers would be repaid.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, if we go back and recall the circumstances surrounding that \$87 billion, remember when the President went on national television and announced to the American people he was going to ask for an additional \$87 billion, his approval rating fell like a rock, because the American people were upset that the needs here at home were being so woefully neglected, and here the President was, coming, asking for an additional \$87 billion.

So many of us thought that the fair thing to do was to take that portion of the \$87 billion that was going to Iraq for the rebuilding of schools and clinics and roads and bridges in Iraq, and to make that available as a loan that would be paid back to this country once Iraq was stable and they had these huge oil sales which was going to make it possible for them to repay that loan. And the White House said, no, no, no. We will only make this money available as an out-and-out gift.

Mr. DELAHUNT. A give-away.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Yes, a give-away. So they went to Madrid to this so-called donors' conference and they came back and they were trying to convince us as a Congress and as the American people that all of these other countries had ponied up, had given their fair share. And what did we find out, as the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) has said here, all of these countries that made monies available made them available in the form of a loan. They will, in fact, at some point be repaid for whatever they give, but not the good old USA. We gave our money away, and now the President is criticizing those of us who fought to have this given as a loan, implying, I guess, that somehow we did not care about the troops. Which is, quite frankly, a little outrageous.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, there is another aspect of this \$87 billion that we need to point out, of whose money the President wanted to spend. He wants to spend our grandchildren's money. Because every single one of those \$87 billion he committed to Iraq, which had to be spent in some sense, but instead of us paying for it and dealing with it with taxes, he wanted, and he consciously decided to make it all deficit spending. We had a proposal to pay for it so that our grandchildren would not have that deficit spending obligation on them.

Now, why is this? I think this is symptomatic of why we need a new administration with a fresh policy. Winston Churchill said, all I have to offer you is blood, sweat, toil, and tears. This President said, you can fight this battle on the cheap. It will be sugar candy, roses, and champagne corks all the way. And as a result of that, we got \$87 billion deficit spending, 1,000 dead, and a silent draft that is going on now drafting our people to serve longer times than they really did sign up for

when they went into the military. That is why everybody in this chamber is hearing stories about 50-year old people who left their career for a year, came back, now have to go back for another year, and goodness knows how many years, because they have not committed the troops that are necessary to get this job done like General Shinseki told them.

This President wanted to fight this war on the cheap. It has cost us in lives, it has cost us in deficit spending, and we need a new policy. We do not say this just to be critical; we say this to get a new policy in Iraq. Unless we get that, we are heading into deep, deep trouble.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier this evening, the only people sacrificing for this war are the soldiers and the people who love them. They are the only ones who are sacrificing, and that is sad.

EMOTIONAL TRIP TO RUSSIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McCOTTER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for the remainder of the time until midnight.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise not to refute or answer the comments that we just heard for the last several hours, but I will make a couple of comments. First of all, rather than listen to Members of Congress and this body talk about the conditions in Iraq, tomorrow the American people will have a chance to listen to the Prime Minister of Iraq himself whose life has been threatened 4 times, attempted assassinations on him. I think the American people should listen to that gentleman, Prime Minister Alawi, to have us get an understanding of how well his country is responding to our effort.

In terms of the need for the use of our Reservists, as the vice chairman of the Committee on Armed Services, I would just remind our colleagues that it was during the 1990s that our troops were deployed 38 times. None of those deployments were paid for and, as a result, we had to cut the size of our military. The Army, for instance, in almost half, cutting our armored divisions down to 20; the Navy was cut from 585 ships to 314. As a result of those significant cutbacks during the 1990s, it was necessary to go to a policy that included the use of our Guard and Reserve forces. This was clearly understood in the 1990s because we had no choice. As our military budget was cut back, we had to rely more and more on the Guard and Reserves, that is why the Guard and Reserves are being used today in Iraq. I would add, Mr. Speaker, commitments were made that our troops would be out of Bosnia before Christmas of 1996. Our troops are still in Bosnia in the fall of 2004.

So again, the rhetoric on this floor is typical rhetoric that we hear before an